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[Letter de M.R. Ahmed a Lord 'Avebury']

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REFERENCE:

28 December 1984

Dear Lord Avebury,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 6 December 1984 relating to the question of East Timor. As you have mentioned, the Secretary-General submitted a Progress Report to the General Assembly in July 1984. In that report, he provided a general outline of the efforts he has made since early 1982 to facilitate a comprehensive settlement of the problem.

At the beginning of its current session, the General Assembly, acting upon a recommendation of the General Committee, decided, without objection, to defer consideration of the question of East Timor to next year's session. This decision, however, did not deprive Member States of the possibility of expressing their views on the problem during the Assembly's general debate. Twelve countries did, in fact, refer to it and all of those who mentioned the Secretary-General's involvement expressed support for his actions and encouraged him to continue his efforts towards a comprehensive solution.

As you are aware, resolution 37/30, adopted by the General Assembly on 23 November 1982, was rejected by Indonesia. This is but one of several situations in which a General Assembly resolution has been considered unacceptable by one side or the other. In the case of East Timor, as in some other cases, the Secretary-General has, nevertheless, been able to initiate an exercise of good offices which has been

His Excellency
Lord Avebury, Chairman
Parliamentary Human Rights Group
House of Commons
London

welcomed by all concerned. He has reported to the Assembly, as far as is possible in a public document, on the status of his efforts. However, you will surely understand that, if this exercise is to have a reasonable chance for success, the Secretary-General cannot publicize the various substantive steps that have been taken or may be contemplated in the course of the negotiating process.

The Secretary-General appreciates your sustained interest in the United Nations' endeavours to contribute to the search for a comprehensive settlement of this complex situation. I also wish to assure you, on his behalf, that the concerns expressed in your letter to him of 10 August 1984 were carefully noted and will be very much borne in mind as the process unfolds.

May I add that I was glad to have had the opportunity to greet you briefly during your recent visit to New York.

With best wishes for the New Year, I remain

Yours sincerely,

Rafeeuddin Ahmed
Under-Secretary-General